



## **WITNESS TO CHRIST AND FRESHEN THE WORLD WITH FRAGRANCE OF THE LORD, CHRISTIANS TOLD**

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### **KAFANCHAN, NIGERIA -**

Catholics have been called upon to brace up to all challenges and witness to Christ in order to “freshen the world with the aroma and fragrance of the Lord so as to become a magnet drawing men and women away from darkness of sin and death to the newness of life which he has inaugurated by his birth into our world and thereby becoming the true salt and light of the world.”

This admonishment was made by the Catholic Bishop of Zaria, Most Rev. George Jonathan Dodo, at the Vigil Mass for the burial of the late Bishop of Kafanchan Diocese, Most Rev. Joseph Danlami Bagobiri. The ceremony took place at St. Peter Clever Cathedral, Kafanchan, Kaduna State and was attended by about 18 members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), led by its President, Most Rev. Augustine Obiora Akubeze of Benin Archdiocese; dignitaries from all walks of life from within and outside the country; priests Religious and lay faithful from different parts of the country.

In the homily titled: Endings For New Beginnings, Bishop Dodo spoke extensively on the paradoxes of life, using relevant passages in the Bible and other natural events of life to buttress his point. His words: “In reality, both things are happening at the same time; endings almost always mark new beginnings, and new beginnings often mark an ending of the old.” According to him: “Our lives daily are filled with examples of this paradox. Marriage is an ending

of bachelorhood/spinsterhood and a beginning of a married life.” He added: “The end of Jesus’ physical journey opened up new beginnings and a new quality of life to all who believe.”

Bishop Dodo used the occasion to remind all present at the ceremony that since death is the end of earthly life; life is a temporary existence while death is a necessary exit from this world for every human being to account for our lives before God. He urged: “Don’t devalue or hurt anyone in this life ... You may be powerful today, but time is more powerful than you!” Noting that there is limited time to bring life to fulfillment, the homilist urged the faithful to remain steadfast in their Christian vocation so that when the time for their encounter with the Lord comes, they would be prepared to make a tremendous act of love for God.

The local Ordinary of Zaria Diocese noted that the holiness of the faithful is vital to the growth of the Church; and “Paul challenges us to an attractive and exemplary Christian lives in his letter to the Corinthians (11 Cor 3: 2-3 and II Cor 2:15).” He stressed: “Together, these passages speak of the importance of witnessing for Christ; adding that: “this is necessary in order to counter the forces of darkness that continue to rule the world.

Bishop Dodo outlined the qualities of the late Bishop Bagobiri saying: “We are here to rest from all his labours an ecclesiastic who was a man of his own person, a friend, a shepherd with who friendship and or the leader and the led relationship could be difficult to manage, especially when and where your opinions and ideas differed.” Noting that the late Bishop made positive contributions as much as he could for the Church at all levels; the homilist also described late Bishop Bagobiri as one who lived and worked to raise Christ’s faithful in accord with his understanding. He therefore called on the faithful to “be fragrance of Christ both among those who are being saved and among those who are on the way to destruction.”

Bishop Dodo however regretted that, today, many Christians have compromised the gospel and have failed to become effective advertisers for Christ, let alone become his fragrance in the world. He therefore urged that there is need to “be filled with a holy rage for God and rise to the challenge of Christian witnessing”; adding that “that is what

the season of Lent demands from every believer.”

The ceremony was attended by about 18 members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), led by the President, Most Rev. Augustine Obiora Akubeze of Benin City; dignitaries from all walks of life from within and outside the country and representatives of the different societies from most of the Archdioceses and dioceses in the country.

The remains of the late Bishop Danlami Joseph Bagobiri of Kafanchan Catholic Diocese was buried at St. Peter Clever Cathedral, Kafanchan, Jema’a Local Government Area of Kaduna State on Thursday, March 15, 2018. He died in Kaduna on February 27, at the age of 61 after a protracted illness.